

Course Title: Private Voice Lessons
Course Number: MPAVP-UE 1111-017 (13222) (Undergraduate)
MPAVP-GE 2111-017 (6919) (Graduate)
Academic Year: 2015-2016
Professor: Kathleen Myrick (as a courtesy, I ask you to please
address me as Professor Myrick-not Kathleen)
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Course Expectation:

Clear communication is very important between student and teacher. If you find something confusing, vague or different, please ask for clarification.

You have chosen Steinhardt's program to receive a solid education with hopes to become a great performer in the professional industry. Discipline and motivation are **your** responsibility. Most professional singers are employed because they have a history of great diligence, verses great talent (though it helps to have the latter). I expect you to work extremely hard in your scholastic preparations (i.e. musical accuracy, memorization, translations, character analysis, etc.). I expect you to practice consistently. I also expect you to transfer the mindfulness, which you gain during lessons, into practice rooms and performances. This is how I will assess your final grade each semester. Keep in mind that the work ethic you create now will ultimately determine your future success when you leave this institution. Please make the most of why you are here.

For vocal consistency and optimal growth, you may not study with another voice teacher during your time at NYU.

Semester Objectives:

- Establish and maintain a healthy vocal technique.
- Gain a better understanding of how your voice functions.
- Apply healthy vocal technique to new and old vocal repertoire.
- Foster musicality and expressivity in both the music and text.
- Integrate healthy technique into dramatic circumstances.

Semester Requirements:

1. Students must bring a small recording device to their lesson each week. This is mandatory. Your grade will be lowered if you fail to record your lesson more

- than once. At times, I will ask you specific questions that pertain to your previous lesson. Be prepared. It is my goal to improve your “mindfulness” of how you sing verses how you *think* you sound.
2. Students will keep a notebook of all assigned music. This can also serve as a notebook to record assignments, vocal exercises, observations, and research in the preparation of music. It is my goal to prepare you for the professional world of auditions and rehearsals. Organization is essential.
 3. Students should arrive at their lesson on time, well rested, energized, and ready to work. Considering the amount of singing that will happen during your lesson, **DO NOT WARM UP BEFORE YOUR LESSON**. This is my responsibility. Also, do not rehearse your music with your accompanist the day of your lesson. Plan ahead.
 4. Based on year and program, each student is expected to learn a set amount of repertoire each semester. I will select songs that are appropriate to fulfill these requirements knowing your individual abilities. I require all music is sent via email in PDF format. I am open-minded to your ideas (or the ideas of other professors), but my main object is healthy singing. Keep in mind that a seemingly simple or boring song most likely has a technical objective on my part. I’m less interested in repertoire that is dramatically/vocally “impressive,” but rather music that is well suited to your skills. I will always view your singing as a progressive process rather than a result-driven objective.
 5. When choosing repertoire, I will consider reviewing songs you would like to sing during your time at NYU. Please send me PDF's of any pieces (no YouTube videos) that you would like me to review. Please keep in mind we must fill in the specific time periods required by Steinhardt on your repertoire sheet and ultimately these songs must be placed into groups for your recital(s). Songs that contain more “assets” will be chosen over those that contain a high number of “liabilities” for accelerated technical growth. Please review the assets/liabilities PDF on the website and ask questions for clarification.
 6. The semester before your recital you should have a general idea of what will be on your program. I highly recommend the summer prior to your recital year, that you research options that would like to sing and send me PDF's of what you would like to perform. This is an opportunity to gain a profound knowledge of music that is available to you. Go to the library, look over scores, listen to YouTube videos, check out others recitals and get ideas. Please read the recital packet on the website and know what is expected of you. I will help you prepare your songs, but you will need to do everything else that is required to complete your recital requirements (turn in paperwork to office, translations, room reservations, programs, etc.).
 7. Students are expected to keep a cumulative Repertoire List throughout their NYU career. This list will be comprised of memorized music in specific genres and languages that fulfill your repertoire requirements. For new students, this will be explained in detail during your first lesson. You will be required to give me an updated copy of this list at the end of each semester. Transfer students will need to include their repertoire from previous studios/schools.
 8. Each week you will be given a “Lesson Sheet” with your weekly vocal assignments.

The following week, you will be responsible for returning that sheet and a grade will be assigned based on accomplishing these goals. This will be part of your final grade. **They are due not later than 11:59 PM the night before your lesson and placed in your individual Dropbox folder. Each lesson sheet turned in late will lower your final grade by ½ a point. 100 will become 99.5, 99.5 will become 99, etc. Your 14th lesson sheet is due one week after your 14th lesson.**

9. There will be a midterm exam (7th lesson) consisting of:

- A self warm-up
- All assigned repertoire for the current term performed from memory
- Typed IPA & Translation of all songs for the current term (Dropbox File)

10. On your 14th lesson (“final exam”) both terms you are required to:

- Update/Create in your Dropbox File your final professional song list

Attendance/Make Up Lessons:

- Attendance and punctuality is mandatory.
- Excused absences due to illness must be given as soon as possible. If you are sick, stay home and recover. I must have a doctor’s note for your absence to be excused. Please contact me the **moment** you feel you are not well and I will place someone in your lesson time immediately. Last minute cancellations leave an hour of unused time and is essentially a “lost hour” for me.
- Same day cancellations are considered UN-excused and will not be made up under any circumstance.
- Religious observation absences must be given at the beginning of the semester.
- The final grade will be lowered if more than 2 excused absences occur (including illness).
- There are NO make up lessons for make up lessons.
- Steinhardt Policy: The final grade MUST be lowered for any *unexcused* absences.
- Any excused absences will be made up at a time that is mutually convenient. Please understand I am at NYU only on select days and I do not live close-by. Make-ups are **very** complicated, so make **every** effort to attend your lessons.

Lesson Swapping:

- I teach 7 days a week I truly have no “free time” to offer make-up lessons. If you cannot attend your lesson, you have two options:
 1. Swap with another student. I will leave this up to you to make the swap. I ask all of you in my studio to be flexible to swap with those that ask. Please use the (private) contact sheet on www.voceclassica.com and CC me in all e-mails. Once the swap has been made that is your new lesson time for that week. Mark your calendar accordingly. This must be used for **extreme cases only** and you must run the reason by me first and get my permission for the swap. Reaching out to me in advance is important, because last minute swaps are very hard to make happen. The moment you know you might not attend your lesson start the process. I suggest you do a **group** e-mail to reach more prospective switching candidates.
 2. If you choose to not attend your lesson, you will be marked as excused if you

bring in a doctor's note. If you feel under the weather and your voice is not 100% please attend your lessons anyway. We will execute bubble therapy and make great use of your lesson time as well as help you recover. I have had students that came into a lesson compromised vocally and after bubble therapy, not only did they learn more about how to use their voice more efficiently, they felt much better at the end of the session. Please make every effort to attend each class to not miss your time.

Preparation of Assigned Music:

All music that I assign **MUST** be learned within the given semester - no exceptions.

Since all assigned music will eventually be sung during the semester, it is wise to prepare ahead of time. Here are two important guidelines:

1. When I ask you to **prepare** a song(s) for the following lesson, I expect notes, rhythms, entrances, and languages to be accurate as to the printed page. If I sense that you are searching for notes, rhythms, etc. (which is easy to spot), I deduce that you have not done your homework for my class and your grade will be lowered for the day. When singing a "prepared" song in your lesson, I expect you to use your music. Since I will give you specific technical tasks during the song, it will give you a literal place to write notes to remind yourself. The tasks are then integrated into your voice as you memorize the song.
2. When I ask you to **memorize** a song(s), you must perform your song without music.

Please advise me of all the courses in which you are expected to sing (i.e. Song Repertoire, Analysis, Opera Workshop, etc.).

You are encouraged (if not expected) to bring in songs for another class, audition, performance, etc. However, we will first work on songs that I assigned from the previous lesson. Any additional music can be worked on after this point. This ensures that you are prepared for your lesson.

Hastily memorizing music often leads to ingrained errors that are often difficult to unlearn. Therefore, be precise when learning new literature. This even includes songs where singers have typically taken a degree of musical and rhythmic freedom. Learn what is on the page first.

Feel free to find a recording of the piece, but do not use this as a learning or memorization tool. Rely on what Sondheim/Verdi wrote vs. what Patinkin/ Pavarotti sang on their recordings. Discovering multiple versions of a song can be helpful in learning stylistic interpretations between singers as well as understanding the continuation of historical performance practices (i.e. How does one sing Handel vs. Puccini or Rodgers vs. JRB?).

Research the composer and the poet/librettist. Understand the current mental/emotional state of the character. What are my character's circumstances? Why is my character saying these words? Be prepared to discuss this information during the lesson.

If the song is in a foreign language, write out the text, translation and IPA. Nothing is more impressive than hearing a singer effectively communicate in a language it is not his/her own. The International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) will be utilized in the lesson.

Repertoire Selection Policy:

Selecting repertoire for recitals, showcases, classes and auditions will be at my discretion. This includes participation as a "guest artist" (often character studies) in classmate recitals. You (and others) may give input, but the final decision will be mine. If you feel you will encounter problems with this policy, **we can reassign you to another studio.**

All music chosen to perform in public performances or auditions must be worked in a lesson prior to performance.

Practicing:

When dealing with physical coordination, the phrase "practice makes perfect" should be modified to "practice makes permanent." Therefore, I expect you to practice every day to ensure optimal vocal progress (although it's good for the voice/brain/soul to take a day off once a week). One should begin with 25-30 minutes of the vocalises utilized in the lesson, followed by 30 minutes of practicing/memorizing repertoire.

Please remember to warm up prior to any class in which you are expected to perform - including choir or stage rehearsals. Again, I would prefer that you not warm-up vocally for your lesson.

Since we cannot leave our instruments in a case or practice room, please pace yourself if you have a lot of additional singing to do with the day. I am a huge proponent of "marking" during rehearsals when scenes/songs are repeated more than once. Typically, it is best to mark before you experience vocal fatigue. Please ask if you need me to explain how to mark effectively.

Keep in mind that singing is a physical activity that requires patience and diligence. You cannot "cram" for a lesson/recital/ performance as you could for a history exam. Expecting your mind to thoroughly learn words, notes, and rhythms is impossible. An even more impossible task is expecting your voice and body to adjust to new coordination skills with ease and longevity.

Remember that a lot of song preparation requires no singing.

Accompanists:

It is required that you provide an accompanist for the last thirty minutes of your lesson. You are also expected to practice with him/her for an additional thirty minutes between weekly lesson times. THIS IS NOT OPTIONAL. Steinhardt will cover the cost of your pianist during lessons. In regards to suggested weekly coaching sessions, plan on this financial commitment for your entire academic career. Lessons are not times to learn your notes or work with the accompaniment for the first time. Pianist generally charge \$20-\$25 for 30 minutes. Out of respect to your pianist, give him/her a separate music notebook. Attempting to read small notes and words over someone's shoulder while singing is neither beneficial to your posture nor to your pianist's ear.

When selecting an accompanist, be sure that you choose someone who can meet regularly (and practice your music). Repertoire work is extremely brief during a lesson (only 30 minutes). Addressing ensemble issues is a waste of valuable lesson time if not taken care of in advance.

It is always your responsibility to notify your accompanist of any lesson changes (rescheduling date/location/etc.), regardless if the change comes from me. Do not assume I have emailed or texted your pianist.

Your skills as a performer are highly influenced by the musicians with whom you work. If I find that your accompanist is not providing the necessary skills to support and foster your development, I will help you find a new pianist.

Grading system:

- 40% - Music Research/Preparation/Memorization
- 30% - Technical Work
- 15% - Conduct/Attitude/Attendance
- **15 %-Mid-term/Final/Lesson Sheets**

All students are responsible for understanding and complying with the NYU Steinhardt [Statement on Academic Integrity](#).

Students with Disabilities:

Students with physical or learning disabilities are recommended to register at the [Moses Center for Students with Disabilities](#).

Staying Connected:

I prefer that the majority of your lesson be spent singing. If you would like to meet

outside of your lesson time to discuss other issues, please contact me to set up a meeting. Since e-mail is the official means of communication for NYU, please advise me if your address (or cell phone) changes. It is imperative that you check your email, and respond according on a regular basis. **I am grateful that we have technology to increase our speed and ease of communication. That being said, some conversations should happen the old fashioned way (i.e.: in person).**